

APPOINTMENTS

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has made the following appointments:

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Board will not consider complaint

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

The city of Rochester's Board of Ethics does not plan to investigate a complaint against City Councilman Robert J. Stevenson related to the defeat of a proposal to designate Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral a landmark.

Filed by opponents of plans to renovate the cathedral, the landmark application was denied by the City Planning Commission in October. Subsequently, local attorney Mary E. Aramini filed a complaint, charging that she had overheard Stevenson, a member of the cathedral renovation committee, talking about the renovations with commission members James Ely and Kara Hartway prior to the vote. Aramini said the discussion took place Oct. 7 in the hallway outside City Council chambers, where the commission had just concluded public discussion on the landmark decision. Both Ely and Hartway voted against the landmark designation.

Frank Crego, the ethics board chairman, said the board had consulted with city attorneys and

found it had no jurisdiction to investigate Aramini's complaint. The board is narrowly designed by statute to investigate "economic" conflicts of interest, he said. If a city inspector who moonlighted as a contractor were investigating a builder with whom he had a contract, for example, that would constitute a conflict covered by the board's authority, Crego said. The complaint about Stevenson's alleged conversations with planning commission members does not fall under the ethics board's directives, he added.

"Whether that's appropriate or not, that's not a matter determined

for the board of ethics to pass judgment on," he said.

Stevenson said he was glad the matter had been "put to rest for now," and added that he felt he had done nothing wrong.

Aramini said that she had read the city's code of ethics, and still believed Stevenson violated it. She said she would write another letter detailing her concerns to Crego. She also criticized Stevenson's hallway discussion with commission members, and asked why he did not speak at the public hearing.

"If he did not feel there was anything wrong, why didn't he just go in and testify?" she asked.

Attorney files more abuse suits

A Binghamton attorney filed lawsuits Dec. 3 and Dec. 6 involving allegations of repeated sexual abuse by Albert H. Cason, a former diocesan priest. Like a similar suit filed Nov. 26, both name St. Patrick's Parish in Owego, the Diocese of Rochester, Bishop Matthew H. Clark and the Holy See as defendants.

The two new cases — a \$50 million lawsuit filed Dec. 6 in Binghamton's U.S. District Court as well as an \$8 million suit filed Dec. 3 in state Supreme Court also in Binghamton — were filed by attorney Ronald R. Benjamin on behalf of two plaintiffs, both identified as "John Doe."

On Nov. 26 Benjamin filed a \$40 million lawsuit in Binghamton's U.S. District Court on behalf of plaintiff James Insko, 37, of California.

The attorney alleged that all three plaintiffs were victims of sexual

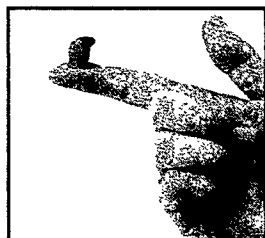
abuse by Cason during the 1970s while they were altar boys at St. Patrick Church, where Cason was co-pastor for 12 years. The suits charge that church officials were negligent in supervising Cason and that they concealed information regarding his sexual misconduct.

Benjamin told the *Catholic Courier* Dec. 10 that he planned to file three additional lawsuits later that day, as well four or five more in ensuing days — all involving alleged sexual abuse by Cason.

Michael Tedesco, diocesan spokesman, said Dec. 10 that the diocese had received the Dec. 6 lawsuit but not the previous two suits. He did not comment except to acknowledge that the diocese had removed Cason from ministry in 1985 due to allegations of sexual misconduct.

— Mike Latona

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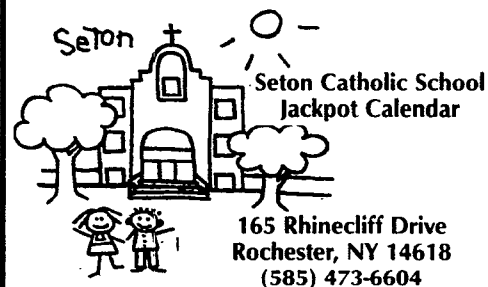
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